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The Luciferian Public Sphere: Theosophy and Editorial Seekership in the 1880s

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In January 1889, the London-based Theosophical journal *Lucifer* proclaimed, with no small irony, that occultism and the commercial culture of the late Victorian periodical press were fundamentally incompatible. Such pronouncements had featured regularly in *Lucifer* since its establishment two years earlier under the volatile co-editorial directorship of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Mabel Collins, and they are uttered with particularly fervency here in the last issue on whose masthead both women's names would appear. Condemning those opportunists who, like rival occult group the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, were debasing occult wisdom by exposing it to the vitiating light of publicity, *Lucifer* declares:

> TO DARE, TO WILL, TO ACHIEVE, AND TO KEEP SILENT is the motto of the true occultist, from the first adept of the fifth Race down to the last Rosecroix. True occultism, i.e. genuine *Raj-Yoga* powers, are not pompously boasted of, and advertised in dailies and monthlies, like Beecham's pills or Pear's soap.[1]

What are we to make of the placement of such a statement within a monthly magazine which had, over the course of its short sixteen-month history, arguably done nothing *but* publicize the teachings of the occult world to an uninitiated audience, and at the affordable price of 1/6d? In September 1887, *Lucifer*'s inaugural issue had declared its mission to be one of democratic enlightenment, aiming to "thro[w] a ray of truth on everything hidden by the darkness of prejudice, by social or religious misconceptions."[2] This ambition, however, seems fundamentally irreconcilable with any definitions of occultism which prioritize its hidden, elite, or anti-commercial nature, as *Lucifer* here appears to do.[3] One might be tempted to dismiss this Luciferian press philosophy as yet another example of the incoherence and contradiction for which Victorian critics routinely lampooned Theosophy's spiritual tenets.

Yet to do so is to drastically under-reckon the complexity and innovation of Blavatsky and Collins's polemic editorial style, one which aimed at the production of a particularly modern form of spiritual identity and whose implications extended far beyond the pages of *Lucifer*. The periodical's significance for the nineteenth-century occult revival in which it participated, I will argue, lay less in its publication of specific arcane secrets or beliefs than in its editorial promotion of the open-ended mode of spiritual seekership destined to become central to the twentieth-century New Age movements which proliferated in its wake.[4] The form of the monthly periodical, characterized by eclecticism, seriality, and topicality, may indeed have seemed anathema to conservative understandings of occultism as an elitist, ancient, and bibliolatric enterprise, but it was nonetheless absolutely vital to the anti-authoritarian spiritual seekership by which *Lucifer* sought, with mixed success, to characterize Theosophy. At the time of *Lucifer*'s establishment, I suggest, no one better understood or aggressively exploited the potential of the periodical form to produce a modernized version of occult identity than Blavatsky and Collins, figures united by both their prominence in the Theosophical movement and their considerable experience as press contributors.[5] Indeed, it is a result of these similarities in experience and outlook that we can treat Collins and Blavatsky's intellectual contribution to the development of the early *Lucifer* as equal, even though Collins would later paint a much darker and more exploitive portrait of their relationship in her thinly-veiled anti-Theosophical *roman à clef Morial the Mahatma* (1891).[6]

The position of seekership which this essay will identify in *Lucifer* can be understood as one of either constant openness or constant lack; it allows individuals to enter the spiritual marketplace as consumers united only by their dissatisfaction with religious and scientific orthodoxy, and an unwillingness to stop seeking. The seeker is not ally to but rival of the believer; indeed, fixed belief would shut down her quest, which derives its spiritual validity from constant movement. "[S]eekers," attests Colin Campbell,

"do not necessarily stop seeking when a revealed truth is offered to them, nor do they necessarily stop looking in other directions when one path is indicated as *the* path to truth."[7] Seekership is thus perfectly suited to the secular conditions of late capitalism in which new beliefs can be endlessly acquired and combined without the need to defer to a prevailing orthodoxy. It is also a mode ideally suited to the eclecticism and continuity of the periodical format, which typically privileges no single voice and is free to continuously re-open debate in response to the demands of readers, contributors, and editors. In what follows, I will demonstrate Blavatsky's and Collins's incorporation of the spirit of seekership into their editorial practice, ultimately arguing that closer attention to periodicals such as *Lucifer* might radically transform our understanding of the print culture, belief structure, and audience recruitment strategies of the late Victorian occult revival.

The Theosophical Public Sphere and the Foundation of *Lucifer*

When *Lucifer* launched, the Theosophical Society was just under twelve years old, having been founded in New York City in 1875 by a group of sixteen spiritual seekers headed by the American journalist, soldier, and insurance lawyer Henry Steel Olcott (the Society's first president) and the aristocratic Russian émigré and spiritualist Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (the Society's first corresponding secretary).[8] The Society's initial aim of reforming spiritualism was soon replaced by its promotion of the teachings of an— or rather, *the*— ancient wisdom religion which Blavatsky claimed to be receiving in supernaturally-precipitated letters sent by a cadre of mysterious ancient adepts known alternately as the Mahatmas or the Masters.[9] These teachings emphasized the persistent viability of the occult sciences and called for a recognition of the essential oneness of humanity, beyond sectarian and racial divides.[10]

Blavatsky first publicized the wisdom of the masters in two weighty volumes allegedly written under their influence: *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), both of which, despite their considerable size and opaque content, would come to be best sellers.[11] Yet it was not only, or perhaps not even usually, in abstruse tomes such as these that late Victorian readers could encounter Theosophical ideas. *Isis Unveiled* may have sold 1,000 copies within ten days of its first publication,[12] but it seems unlikely that all of these initial purchasers made it through the book's two volumes and nearly 700 dense pages. Curious members of the public with little time or taste for metaphysical jargon could turn instead to Alfred Percy Sinnett's far more accessible *The Occult World* (1881) and *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883), or, from the early eighteen-eighties onwards, to the growing tide of fiction which included Theosophical characters and tropes.[13] For seekers who preferred magazines to books, there was also a rich and fecund Theosophical periodical press. By 1887, the movement had spawned an impressively international body of competing monthly magazines, including *The Theosophist*, established by Olcott and Blavatsky in 1879 as the Society's official magazine and still running today;[14] *The Occult Word*, issued from modern spiritualism's historical stomping ground of Rochester, New York between 1884-1889; *The Path,* founded in New York in 1886 and running under this title until 1896; and Paris's *Le Lotus* (1887-1889).[15] The geographical range and number of these titles provides a good indication of the early Society's proselytizing ambitions; even Theosophy's (numerous) critics, like W.D. Strappini in *The Dublin Review*, were forced to admire the "vigorous efforts" of adherents to "propagate their ideas."[16]

Beyond the purpose of doctrinal dissemination, these vehicles also served the much-needed purpose of defending Theosophy from both external and internal assault. In the run up to *Lucifer*'s establishment, the Theosophical Society was wracked by the high-profile scandal that came to be known as the "Coulomb affair," one which divided Theosophy's proponents and undermined its credibility to the outside world. In 1884,

Blavatsky was accused of faking the Mahatma letters by Emma and Alexis Coulomb, former employees of the Society's new international headquarters in Adyar who had been recently been fired from their posts. They claimed that, far from being precipitated into Blavatsky's rooms by supernatural means, the communications had indeed been positioned there by sleight of hand. While Theosophical supporters insisted that the allegations were nothing more than malicious lies produced for the purpose of payback, outsiders were more inclined to take the Coulombs seriously. When the Society for Psychical Research sent Richard Hodgson to investigate, he ultimately endorsed the Coulombs' allegations in what Olav Hammer describes as a "devastating" blow against Theosophy's reputation.[17] The Theosophical press played a leading role in defending Blavatsky at this time,[18] as they would in mediating the internal disputes which followed in its wake, such as the growing tension between Blavatsky and Sinnett. No less dramatic was the internecine rift known as the "Coues-Collins affair" which ultimately ended the editorial partnership of Blavatsky and Collins. Collins was ousted in February 1889 after angering Blavatsky by claiming exclusive authorial credit for the devotional work *Light on the Path* which she (Collins) had published in 1885. At Blavatsky's instigation, the book had originally been attributed to the occult master Hilarion who was supposedly working through Collins; later, at the encouragement of Blavatsky critic Elliot Coues, Collins renounced this attribution and claimed it to be the product of her own visionary experience.[19] The pair's split ultimately reveals the hard limit of the anti-authoritarianism that *Lucifer* had been promoting since its debut, suggesting that both textual authority and authorship mattered more to Theosophy than the periodical's editorials often claimed.

Lucifer's flamboyant cultivation of a press-mediated form of seekership can be recognized as both a response to and a catalyst of the crises of authority which wracked Theosophy in the 1880s. It was very much a paper at war, chronicling and coordinating Theosophy's campaigns against the hostile secular press, scientific materialism,

mainstream Christianity, and its own internal factions. Yet this pugilistic position did not produce anything like the coordinated, hard-line defensive stance that we might expect from a new spiritual movement under attack. On the contrary, as we will see, *Lucifer* deliberately eschewed any closing of the ranks, adopting instead an almost perverse and sometimes even self-defeating ideological eclecticism. While this strategy may have been antithetical to theological and political coherence, it was nonetheless wholly compatible with, and even requisite to, the condition of seekership that Collins and Blavatsky wanted to promote. Even in a late Victorian publishing context when, as Marysa Demoor notes, there was no requirement for periodical editors to present ideologically consistent content which reflected their own views,[20] *Lucifer* is distinguished by its persistent and explicit— if not always convincing— disavowal of editorial sectarianism. Collins and Blavatsky may not always have been as disinterestedly anarchistic in their selection of contents as they claimed— after all, they published no articles that attacked Theosophy at any length, and without rejoinder— yet their claim to be so was vital to their promotion of spiritual seekership and of the Luciferian public sphere alike.

Blavatsky and Collins first met in London in November of 1884, when, as Kim Farnell notes, the latter sought advice from the former on *Light on the Path*, the work over whose authorship they would later irreparably quarrel.[21] Blavatsky counselled Collins on how to best present the book to the public— that is, as an inspired work produced under the guidance of the Theosophical Master Hilarion— and their working relationship must have proved promising enough, at least at first, to encourage them to enter into editorial partnership. It was to be the organ of the Blavatsky Lodge, a newly-established outlet of the Theosophical Society in England which had been set up in rivalry with A.P. Sinnett's earlier London Lodge. Farnell explains that Blavatsky wanted to use the journal as a vehicle for the opinions—mostly her own—that struggled to find expression in Olcott's India-based and Asian-focused *The Theosophist*.[22] It was to be a well-produced but

accessibly-priced monthly, echoing in its production design the ample margins and sober type-face of respectable London spiritualist weekly *Light*.[23] Issues typically ran between 70-90 pages, and included regular features such as polemic leaders, reviews, and correspondence sections alongside fiction serials, poetry, and articles on a range of occult beliefs, texts, practices, and phenomena.[24] The editors wrote a good deal, but by no means all, of the early content,[25] advertising their names on the masthead as a means of capitalizing on their celebrity in the London occult milieu. Where relevant, as in the case of Collins's serial fiction installments, they also signed their respective contributions, but more often the two operated under the aegis of corporate authorship and wrote as the collective voice of *Lucifer*. In the following sections, I will trace the emergence of *Lucifer*'s seekership *ethos* across three content strands dominant in the periodical's first fifteen issues: 1) the attack on mainstream public opinion and sectarianism; 2) the vexed treatment of Theosophy's relationship to political action and to socialism in particular; and 3) the suspicion, and ultimate redefinition of, magical practice. These themes recur in every issue produced under the Collins-Blavatsky editorial tenure, appearing across all sections including leader articles, serialized fiction, correspondence, book reviews, and indeed the masthead.

The Luciferian Assault on Public Opinion

Lucifer's very title was designed as a weapon for Theosophy's war against the hypocrisy and uniformity of public opinion, serving as both provocation and invitation to the new public that the journal sought to create.[26] The paper's seminal issue explains this selection in its leader article, the content position that would become the privileged site of all of the journal's attacks on the public sphere in the ensuing months. Fascinatingly, and in marked distinction to competing journals like *The Theosophist*, almost none of *Lucifer*'s early leaders are devoted to the explanation of esoteric beliefs, traditions, or

communities.[27] Instead, they focus on the contemporary—and in their view, lamentable—state of Britain's press and public opinion makers. In "What's in a Name? Why the Magazine is Called 'Lucifer'," the inaugural issue justifies the risk of offense that this devilish epithet might cause by exalting the polemic spirit it would foster, one for which Theosophy should aim to become known. The article functions as a manifesto on the spiritual necessity of critical reading practices and anti-authoritarian resistance. *Lucifer*'s aim, it states

> is finally to fight prejudice, hypocrisy, and shams in every nation, in every class of Society, as in every department of life [. . .] [F]or an attempt of such nature, no better title could ever be found than the one chosen. 'Lucifer' is the pale morning-star, the precursor of the noon-day sun [. . .] [N]o fitter symbol exists for the proposed work— that of throwing a ray of truth on everything hidden by the darkness of prejudice, by social and religious misconceptions; especially by that idiotic routine in life, which, once that a certain action, a thing, a name, has been branded by slanderous invention, however unjust, makes *respectable people*, so called, turn away shiveringly, refusing to look at it from any other aspect than the one sanctioned.[28]

The first problem that *Lucifer* thus set itself up to diagnose and correct was not a spiritual, but rather a sociological one. The British public sphere had in its view become almost hopelessly tainted, with its only hope for redemption lying in a return to the Enlightenment values of anti-sectarianism and self-reflexive judgment, deployed here in the service of spiritual illumination. It was less urgent that their public learned to *believe* differently— or in fact that a correct set of beliefs be identified, consolidated, and explained— than that they learned to *debate*.

Not content to simply diagnose the problems with contemporary public opinion, "What's in a Name?" then proceeds to dramatize them by transcribing four allegedly real-

life conversations held in the run-up to the launch between "one of the editors" and different members of the public[29]— a "well-known novelist," "a man of the world," "a fashionable lady interested in occultism," and "a journalist."[30] Intriguingly, none of these figures represent the type of orthodox Christian believer one might expect to be most troubled by the journal's name, a choice which symptomizes the secularist context in which late Victorian occultism operated. Instead, the interview subjects are reproducers of the diseased public opinion at whose hands Theosophy had recently suffered so much damage. They have no real objection to occult thought; on the contrary, all these speakers initially welcome the periodical as a positive step in the right direction. The novelist praises the editorial intention not to target "any class in particular," but to "appeal to the public."[31] "For once I shall be one of the public," she remarks, "for I don't understand your topic in the least, but I want to [. . .] That really is good news for me, for I want to be educated."[32] Equally pleased by the prospect, the Man of the World says, "I hear you are going to start a magazine, all about occultism. Do you know, I am very glad [. . .] some queer things have happened in my life which can't be explained in an ordinary manner. I hope you will go in for explanations."[33] Their enthusiastic approbation soon collapses, however, when they learn the planned title. The interlocutors deem "Lucifer" to be too shocking, pretentious, or challenging a brand for a philistinical general audience from which they *de facto* exempt themselves. "[T]he public don't stay to think of deviations and meanings," warns the Man of the World. "Nobody will buy it."[34] With a name like *Lucifer*, such reactions suggest, the magazine is damned from the outset.

The dialogues and the intensity of repudiation they demonstrate were clearly intended to force a question on *Lucifer*'s early readers: why in the world would Blavatsky and Collins retain such a name in light of these objections? One immediate answer is that their persistence was intended to demonstrate their courage and lack of naiveté about the work ahead. This decision also buttressed the critical identity that *Lucifer* sought to equate

with Theosophy's emerging, and troubled, brand. That public opinion makers should, in the editors' view "be the first to receive a little instruction"[35] suggests that the fifth rather than the first estate was the movement's true target. "What's in a Name?" flattered readers by placing them in a superior category to the failed mouthpieces of public opinion that it interviews. They, by virtue of their decision to read, or, at least, purchase or borrow the magazine despite its provocative name, were initiated into a new Luciferian public unafraid of controversy and eager to embrace polemic debate.

Yet if the readers of *Lucifer* were enlightened, it was not necessary, expected, or even desirable that they be unified in their beliefs. In the January 1888 leader, entitled "To the Readers of Lucifer," Blavatsky directly addressed her audience to complain that the four-month old periodical was already "full of cares and troubles."[36] To a certain extent, she acknowledges, these trials were simply the common lot of all new press ventures in the current era of literary competition and diverse readerships: "This is all it should be; i.e. like every other publication, it must fail to satisfy *all* its readers, and this is only in the nature of things and the destiny of every printed organ."[37] But the case with *Lucifer* was far more extreme; no rival publication, she insisted, received so much abuse and anonymous hate mail. Why was this so? Because the Theosophical position *Lucifer* promoted required an unparalleled mixture of heterodox viewpoints, aiming in this very diversity to hone the critical faculties of readers even at the simultaneous and considerable hazard of causing universal offence. "Since our journal is entirely unsectarian," she writes, "since it is neither theistic nor atheistic [. . .] LUCIFER fails to give full satisfaction to either infidel or Christian."[38] Such failure was necessary if it were to produce rigorous spiritual seekers. As Blavatsky explains, to cater to any consensus position would be to effectively strip *Lucifer* of its Theosophical credentials:

> Free discussion, temperate candid, undefiled by personalities and animosity is, we think, the most efficacious means of getting rid of error and bringing out the

> underlying truth [. . .] All this is true in a special degrees of a Theosophical publication, and LUCIFER feels that it would be unworthy of this designation were it not true to the profession of the broadest tolerance and catholicity, even while pointing out to its brothers and neighbours the errors which they indulge in and follow. Readers, therefore, who are accustomed to find in magazines and party publications only such opinions and arguments as the editor believes to be unmistakeably orthodox— from his peculiar standpoint— must not condemn any article in LUCIFER with which they are not in accord [. . .] They must remember that because LUCIFER is a theosophical magazines, it opens its columns to writers whose views of life and things may not only differ slightly from his own, but even be diametrically opposed to the opinion of the editors.[39]

In this almost anarchistic rejection of stable editorial identity, Blavatsky puts the onus for opinion formation solely on the shoulders of her readers. They are directed to consult, not the Mahatmas, not the editors, but their own reason in forming their opinions.

This stipulation not only worked to rhetorically empower *Lucifer*'s audience, but also to slyly absolve the magazine from any accusation of inconsistency or poor judgment. Thus the editors were able to print the New Dispensationalist W. Eldon Serjeant's recent interpretation of a Scottish cloud formation— Serjeant felt the shapes represented the lion of Judah challenging Victoria, "the female principle of the victor of this world of ignorance, error, sin, crime and misery"[40]— without fear that they might seem unhinged by association. In preface to this bizarre vision, they state: "readers [. . .] are requested to remember that the writers of signed papers in LUCIFER, and not the editors, are responsible for their contents."[41] Such inclusions were justified by the imperative to produce, not docile followers, but active spiritual seekers.

Blavatsky and Collins would repeat these declarations of anti-sectarian impartiality regularly over the course of their tenure, ironically vaunting the value of anti-

authoritarianism at the same time as their clash over the meaning and authorial ownership of *Light on the Path* was coming to a head. They chastised the readers who could not "see *why it should not be a purely Theosophical magazine*, in other words, why it refuses to be dogmatic and bigoted,"[42] and boasted of their superiority in this respect to the secular English dailies. Yet they also made it clear that this inclusivity was expensive. Unlike *The Theosophist*,[43] Lucifer did not take advertisements, and was forced to rely on subscription and patronage for its survival. Ruffled feathers did not always make for easy sales. By March 1889, the journal had raised its price and changed its publisher (from George Redway to the Theosophical Publishing Company), the latter move likely intended to minimize costs. Its situation, Blavatsky insisted in December 1888, would be far more comfortable if it simply adopted a coherent and hence marketable party line. This she refused to do: "As our journal was not established for a money-making enterprise, but verily as a champion for every *fact and truth*, however tabooed and unpopular— it need to pander to no lie or absurd superstition. For this policy the Theosophical Publishing Co. is already several hundred points out of pocket."[44] As this final sentence concedes, survival—both financial and organizational, if Theosophy was to have any kind of distinct, if non-exclusive identity— might require some coherence, some limits to its vaunted policy of open platforming. Could its treatment of politics and practical magic forge the necessary consistency it required? These topics certainly seemed to hold the greatest consolidative promise of all *Lucifer*'s diverse preoccupations and content strands. Yet the centripetal force they exerted remained continually at the mercy of the periodical's anarchic *ethos*.

Socialism and Political Action in Lucifer

The question of whether Theosophy did or should have political implications was highly contested in the eighteen-eighties. Some, like Henry Steel Olcott, insisted that, beyond the promotion of universal brotherhood, Theosophy did not "interfere with

politics" or indeed "caste rules" in India; on the contrary, he wrote in 1889, "we counsel no one to [. . .] depart in any way from the best customs of decent, honest, conservative folk."[45] If it is no longer as an apolitical mystic that Olcott is remembered— he is now recognized as "an important contributor to both the Indian Renaissance in India and the Sinhalese Buddhist Revival in Ceylon"[46]— he certainly toned down Theosophy's radical aspects in this early period. This position, as Stephen Prothero notes, was most likely designed to combat Anglo-Indian suspicions that Blavatsky and Olcott were involved in espionage.[47] Although the London-based *Lucifer* did not face the same scrutiny, it would sometimes follow Olcott's quietist line, publicly rejecting a submission to the December 1888 issue, for example, on the basis that it was "too violent for our columns. We have nothing to do with politics. Cannot be published."[48] By the end of their editorial tenure, however, Blavatsky and Collins had given their readers plenty of reasons to doubt these protestations of political disinterest,[49] most of all via the long-running correspondence they initiated on the compatibility of socialism with theosophy. This debate effectively forced a confrontation between the principles of karmic debt and social change; more importantly, it worked to model a dialectical mode of thought crucial to Theosophical identity.

Lucifer's debate on socialism kicked off in November 1887, in which contributor T.B.H. (T.B. Harbottle) addressed the contentious topic of karmic justice. Characterizing Theosophy as a necessarily non-interventionist, and even bio-deterministic, philosophy, Harbottle argued that its advocates had no business interfering in the dictates of karma. Suffering, he argued, was a product not of social injustice but of the actions undertaken in our past lives; Theosophical brotherhood was not to be confused with the socialist quest for egalitarianism. On the contrary, like other occultists before him, he insisted that a belief in human equality was incompatible with an occult understanding of the universe.[50] "Socialism," he announced,

> advocates a direct interference with the results of the law of Karma and would attempt to alter the denouement of the parable of the talents, by giving to the man who hid his talent under a napkin, a portion of the ten talents acquired by the labour of his more industrious fellow.[51]

In the following issue, Blavatsky and Collins published the first of an extensive series of rejoinders from J. Brailsford Bright, who insisted that the very rise of socialism at the current moment itself represented a karmic imperative towards the pursuit of universal justice. "[I]f [. . .] to advocate changes be to advocate interference with the law of Karma," Bright admonished, "so is every proposal for the amelioration of the physical or intellectual welfare of our fellow."[52] "Any Universal Brotherhood of Theosophists," he concluded, "must be based upon Socialist principles *inter alia*; its foundation may extend deeper and further deeper than those of Socialism, but cannot be less extensive."[53] Bright and Harbottle would continue to debate this issue in the columns of *Lucifer* through to October 1888, with the latter getting the last word but the former the most column width.[54] While Matthew Beaumont is probably right to suggest that the greater amount of space devoted to the socialist position indicates *Lucifer*'s true sympathies,[55] at no point did the editors intervene to endorse one position or to end the correspondence; indeed, this same debate, albeit in different forms and with different participants, would pervade the magazine for years to come, only intensifying when feminist and socialist campaigner Annie Besant joined the editorial team in 1889.[56]

Unsurprisingly, *Lucifer*'s support for political action would become far less tacit during the Besant years. But the magazine's initial equivocation was never simply a result of Collins's and Blavatsky's more conservative sensibilities, although their political views were certainly less radical, and less explicit, than those of their successor. Rather, their editorial interest in socialism seems to have laid less in its rectitude than in its value as a polemical lodestone through which their readers might sharpen and hone the critical

faculties necessary to Theosophical subjectivity. To have granted socialism editorial endorsement would have been to risk adopting the sectarianism they claimed to view as anathema. The Harbottle-Brailsford debate worked instead to formally emphasize and boost the dialogic structure at *Lucifer*'s heart since the playful opening conversations with four members of the public which opened its first issue, and continued in its subsequent "Dialogue" articles.[57] In these, two distinct speakers, sometimes linked to each of the editors, introduced readers to Theosophical topics such as "astral bodies or doppelgangers" through staged debate.[58] Even if this conversation sometimes devolved into a hierarchical exchange between knowledgeable adept and passive *chela*, the formal presentation nonetheless insisted that two voices were always better than one. To a certain extent, this emphasis on polyvocality and continuity is simply intrinsic to the periodical genre, but it took on pointed spiritual significance within the pages of *Lucifer* as Blavatsky and Collins fought for the credibility of Theosophy. Indeed, so important would this dialogic stance become that it would ultimately come in *Lucifer* to substitute for the most controversial aspect of Theosophy's programme: namely, its pursuit of practical occultism.

Practicing Occultism by Press

As Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke reminds us, Theosophy was initially envisioned as a practice-driven form of esotericism whose participants would be enabled to observe magical phenomena first hand and gain direct expertise in occult sciences such as astral projection, divination, clairvoyance, and extreme life extension. In her early efforts to legitimate the movement, Blavatsky would frequently align these occult practices with the working methods of the secular scientist, asserting in *Isis Unveiled*, for example, that "we want to do experiments comparing spiritualism and the magic of the ancients by following literally the instructions of the old Kabbalists, both Jewish and Egyptian."[59] By the time of *Lucifer*'s establishment ten years later, however, such practical ambitions had, for a

number of complex reasons, lost considerable appeal. Most immediately, the previously-discussed Coulomb affair had demonstrated how a reliance on phenomenal demonstration could quickly turn into a liability, delegitimizing the spiritual teachings of Theosophy when its signs and wonders were decried as fake. The was also the pressing issue of ethical responsibility. Who exactly could be trusted to perform magic, and how would such adepts use their skills? How was the Society to discern between prospective practitioners driven by a genuine desire for spiritual improvement, and those who sought only to exploit others? Any lack of integrity in occult practice would, Theosophists held, have devastating consequences whose effects had the potential to last millennia; punitive karmic cycles could be unleashed, and hostile elemental spirits freed to wreak damage on earth and astral plane alike. Few aspirants indeed could be trusted to learn magical skills and attain occult powers of such magnitude.

This concern was particularly live for *Lucifer*. Itself a commercial enterprise which sought, in word if not necessarily in deed, to engage with the widest possible spectrum of public opinion, the magazine was keenly aware of competition from rival outfits which sought to undercut its dialogic route to wisdom. In "Lodges of Magic," the leader for the October 1888 issue, Blavatsky blasts the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, an upstart Glasgow-based collective which had recently started selling the alleged secrets of occult science by mail order, offering to initiate seekers into the unknown world through correspondence priced on a sliding scale from one to five pounds.[60] What the Brotherhood were offering, she argues, simply could not be sold; even if it could, such transactions would be dangerous.

> If the practical impossibility of forcing this process has been shown once, in the course of the theosophical movement, it has scores of times. It is hard to check one's natural impatience to tear aside the veil of the Temple. To gain the divine knowledge, like the prize in a classical *tripos*, by a system of coaching and

> cramming, is the ideal of the average beginner of occult study. The refusal of the originators of the Theosophical Society to encourage such false hopes has led to the formation of bogus Brotherhoods of *Luxor* [. . .] as speculations for human credulity.[61]

Lucifer considered the threat of sham occultism too great to confine such warnings to the leader section alone, where they might only be encountered by readers of a serious disposition. Two months later, it began to serialize Franz Hartmann's *The Talking Image of Urur* (1888-1890), a satirical novel whose denunciation of the idiocies and hazards of contemporary occult societies was so intense that many readers believed it to be an attack on Theosophy itself.[62] Impatient to "lift the veil of Isis and uncover the mysteries of nature,"[63] Hartmann's protagonist leaves his beautiful and more spiritually-gifted wife Conchita to join the charlatanic Society for the Distribution of Wisdom in a remote African village. Like the Theosophical Society, the SDW claims to respect individual liberty of conscience and opinion; in actuality, however, it is intolerant and authoritarian. "Our Society," claims initiate Dr Puffer, "[. . .] advocates a spirit of universal freedom of opinion, provided that opinion holds only to our interpretation of teachings. We claim that everyone has the right to pretend to believe and to say what he believes, if he but thinks as we do."[64] By the time that Pancho finally sees through the SDW's addle-brained followers and the talking stone idol they venerate, it is too late: Conchita has died in an encounter with an unscrupulous mesmerist, and he is left alone and unenlightened in an empty shrine. Practical occult powers may be real, this plot suggests, but human attempts to acquire them are destined to end in tragedy or farce.

Such admonitions did not go down well with the occult students drawn to Theosophy by its initial promise of practical mastery, and *Lucifer*, fulfilling its open-door form, was happy to publish their complaints. Aberdonian reader David Crichton wrote to *Lucifer* in the spring of 1888 to declare that "I think, after reading the conditions necessary

for Occult study in the April number of *Lucifer*, that it would be as well for readers of this magazine to give up all hopes of becoming Occultists. In Britain [. . .] I hardly think it possible that such conditions could ever be realized."[65] Another correspondent challenged the apparent contradiction between the magazine's discouragement of practical occultism on the one hand, and Blavatsky's establishment of an esoteric section of the Theosophical Society on the other, an initiative that seemed designed to offer the elite initiatory training for which she was condemning Theosophy's rivals. Would not the new section, asks writer A.E., "run counter to the views of your Editorial on lodges of magic? Who is to ensure that Esoteric Members are not only willing to, but *will* 'abide by its rules'?"[66] Blavatsky replied with the vague fudge that "it does not run counter, because it is *not* a lodge of *magic*, but of *training*"[67]— although of training for what, if not magic, she does not clarify. Perhaps her obfuscation here derived from the knowledge that Theosophy could not dispense with the lure of and demand for practical instruction entirely. After all, what good could occultism achieve without a practical dimension? *Lucifer* acknowledged this question sympathetically in November 1887 when it cited a "critic [. . .] who has the best possible right to criticize, being a thoroughly practical philanthropist and charitable to the last degree," who had "said of the Theosophists that their much talk and writing seems to resolve itself into mere intellectual luxury, productive of no direct good to the world."[68] If Theosophy was to be all talk and no action, it would never win the audiences or effect the spiritual transformations it sought.

Lucifer responded to such critiques in a way that vindicated its own editorial policies and periodical form. Rather than jettisoning the concept of occult practice altogether, the paper redefined it to comprise, not acts of sorcery, conjuration, or spirit invocation, but rather of philanthropy, activism, and press participation. Magic, *Lucifer* contended, was not the only, most important, or even most common expression of Theosophical practice, as anyone familiar with the Society's charitable works and free

Sanskrit schools in India could attest. Such charitable endeavours had, one article claimed, done more in the last ten years to combat caste and race prejudice on the sub-continent than hundreds of years of Christian missionary contact.[69] Closer to home, suggested Annie Besant in article written after Collins's dismissal, Theosophists might hire local workers, volunteer with their local school boards, or foster impoverished children.[70] Such activities were not to be seen as substitutes for, but direct routes into, the spiritual wisdom which *Lucifer*'s readers sought, allowing them to accrue the superior karma that would advance their opportunities for higher wisdom in subsequent incarnations. Furthermore, the press was central to these initiatives, allowing them to recruit volunteers and publicize their results. Even more important than such practical grassroots activities was the constitutive deed in which *Lucifer*'s audience engaged: namely, reading occult periodicals. Herein lay a vein of practical occultism both safer and more democratic than ritual magic, and less sectarian than party political action. Open to all literate seekers, *Lucifer* aimed to transform the consciousnesses of its readers by exposing them to a heterodoxy of opinion within an unfinished and constantly shifting serial corpus.

The form of occult practice most consistently advocated in *Lucifer* was thus its own textual consumption. Month after month, the editors inveigled readers to buy a subscription,[71] not simply to secure the financial future of the journal, but also to commune with their fellow seekers and hone the faculty of individual judgment which Theosophy had sacralised. The attitude which the journal continually demanded of its readers was ultimately compatible with Blavatsky and Collins's idealized vision of the occult practitioner: intellectually aspirational, anti-sectarian, and able to suspend or empty her own ego in order to host competing points of view. To authorize her quest for wisdom, *Lucifer*'s reader-practitioner would look neither to disembodied Mahatmas, abstruse treatises, or barnstorming editors; instead, she would continually moot new ideas through a process of ongoing debate which the periodical form was perfectly suited to host. This

point is made, albeit somewhat obliquely, in a December 1888 review of the American Theosophical magazine *The Path*. The latter is praised for its unusually clear and explicit directions on occult practice, ones which, *Lucifer* notes with some bemusement, its readers continually seem to miss. Aspiring magical practitioners are then advised not only to read *The Path*, but all Theosophical periodicals, more closely and collectively. "The fact is," *Lucifer* concludes "[. . .] the vast majority are too indifferent even to read the magazines published for their special use, or at least seem to imagine that they have done their duty when they take in one only out of the four which now exist."[72]

The hollowness of *Lucifer*'s protests against occult commercialization are nowhere more apparent than here, when it asks readers to buy four newspapers rather than one. Never wholly or coherently opposed to the marriage of occultism with print capitalism, Blavatsky and Collins recognized the unique potential which the periodical as form held for promoting a modernized form of magical subjectivity. What *Lucifer* challenged was the use of commercial literary forms to hierarchically impose occult belief or identity. Far from cultivating exclusivity, the periodical was if anything too inclusive, its correspondence columns regularly flooded by appeals for the editors to more selectively and carefully police its contents. While a tighter standardization of opinion might have assuaged the protestors, Blavatsky and Collins insisted that such a strategy would also be fatal to Theosophical seekership.

Conclusion: Editorial Seekership and Future of Occult Periodical Studies

My analysis of the Blavatsky-Collins tenure at *Lucifer* has three key implications for future scholarship on the print culture of occult and new religious movements. The first is to assert the overall importance of journals for esotericism studies, a field which, no less than Victorian literary studies, has historically been dominated by the analysis of solo-authored books at the expense of multi-authored and serially-issued periodicals. Today,

scholarship on Britain's nineteenth-century occult revival still typically focuses on a canon of weighty, often cryptic, and sometimes privately circulated major texts: for example, Francis Barrett's *The Magus; or, Celestial Intelligencer* (1801), Godfrey Higgins's *Anacalypsis* (1836), Mary Anne Atwood's *A Suggestive Inquiry into the Hermetic Mystery* (1850), and Blavatsky's own *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888). As Mark Morrison notes, periodicals have received "short shrift" within this nascent field,[73] side-lined by works which may appear, by virtue of their length, identifiable authorship, or subsequent influence, as more reliable indexes to the development of esoteric belief than their more ephemeral periodical counterparts.

Of course, this neglect is not simply a product of bibliolatric prejudice, but also of limited access and preservation. Occult journals were never collected in the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals* nor have they been included in the large-scale digitization projects of Gale Cengage or Proquest.[74] As such, these sources were until recently only available to scholars with geographical access to the rare archives which housed them; even then, runs were often incomplete or, in the case of private collections, unevenly catalogued. This situation improved dramatically with the 2009 launch of IAPSOP (International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals), a privately-funded initiative which digitizes and makes freely available hundreds of occult periodicals published between 1814 and 1939.[75] In combination with the path-breaking work of Mark Morrison, Molly Youngkin, and R.A. Gilbert, IAPSOP has helped to initiate a new surge of interest in the periodical outlets of Victorian occultism, a move which has the potential to radically reconfigure our understanding of the production, dissemination, and reception of occult thought beyond the book in nineteenth-century Britain.[76] More so than any single-authored great book, periodicals like *Lucifer*, in their very form, encouraged the heterodoxy, syncretism, and anti-authoritarian openness important to all nineteenth-

century occult movements, and to Theosophy most of all. As such, they belong not on the fringes but at the very heart of esotericism studies research.

A second finding of my analysis of *Lucifer* is that communal belief—in a particular pneumological system, esoteric tradition, or political ideology— was far less important to the nineteenth-century occult milieu than its contemporary critics, and even subsequent scholars, have supposed. To late Victorian sceptics, the chief problem with Theosophy was that its ontological claims were simply unbelievable— that its allegedly immortal Tibetan Mahatmas were bogus, its teachings plagiarized, and its supernatural phenomena, debunked by the Society of Psychical Research in the 1885 Hodgson report, tricks performed by an accomplished Russian charlatan.[77] These damning critiques hurt the Theosophical Society, and Blavatsky and her defenders certainly took pains to rebut them. But *Lucifer*, as we have seen, also adopted another tack in the face of such condemnation: rather than urging readers to believe, it insisted that belief was by no means necessary to Theosophical identity, and that the best representative of the movement's principles— Leo Tolstoy, for example— had no membership within or even knowledge of the Society.[78] The journal called for a readership made up not of *believers*, but of rather of free thinkers compatible with Campbell's definition of seekers— that is, individuals "who have adopted a problem-solving perspective while defining conventional religious institutions and beliefs as inadequate."[79]

Finally, my argument urges us to think anew about the place of the Theosophical press within the radical print cultures of late Victorian Britain, challenging in particular Elizabeth Miller's annexation of the movement for the "slow print" model she theorizes in her 2013 monograph of the same name. According to Miller, slow print was the dominant mode of late Victorian radical print culture, a capacious category which in her assessment includes the socialist, feminist, and Theosophical press. "Actively oppos[ing] literary and journalistic mass production," slow print "directed itself, for better or worse, to a small-

scale audience, a political and aesthetic counterculture, a public that defined itself against a mass-oriented, mainstream print culture."[80] In its "esoteric qualities," Miller alleges, Theosophy "fit in with a broader tendency [. . .] to break away from the easily digested pap of mass print [. . .] [C]ryptic theosophical allusions could also function in an elitist way to delimit an audience apart from the expansive public of mass print."[81] There are several problems with this reading, perhaps most immediately Miller's assimilation of Theosophy into the category of the "radical," a move which, even in light of her strategically loose definition of "the uncapitalized *radical* [. . .] as shorthand for 'wholesale class-oriented protest'",[82] fails to fit what we have seen to be *Lucifer*'s often highly contradictory approach to political action. As its columns repeatedly demonstrate, there was no single British Theosophical political line in the eighteen-eighties, whether reactionary or socialist.

My argument also equips us with due scepticism towards Miller's contention that the Theosophical press deliberately cultivated a small audience, one whose members required an insider's knowledge of concepts such as the *kama-loka* and the *devachan* in order to penetrate its pages. Willing as Theosophists may have been to attack the mainstream press, *Lucifer* rarely couch such critiques in an arcane insider's language aimed at a select few. Furthermore, its anti-press jeremiads were typically surrounded by contributions designed to be accessible to a broad swathe of non-specialist popular literature readers, including ghost stories, serialized gothic or oriental romances, and poems. Indeed, it requires a considerable cherry-picking of Theosophical sources to conclude that its periodicals were self-consciously exclusive, and it is telling that none of Miller's primary sources— which include Annie Besant's *Autobiography* (1893) and A.R. Orage's *The New Age* (1907-1922)— are actually self-declared Theosophical magazines. When we shift our attention to periodicals which, like *Lucifer*, proudly nailed their Theosophical colours to the masthead, the slow print model becomes far less viable. The Luciferian public sphere cultivated by Blavatsky and Collins sought to embrace the widest

possible audience and range of contributions, not in *spite*, but *because* of Theosophy's syncretic theology; they solicited, not a select body of believer-subscribers who faithfully obeyed their leaders' edicts, but rather an audience of self-directed seekers equipped to sift various diverse religions, philosophical traditions, and journal issues for their various truths.

Ultimately, we have no way of knowing if Blavatsky and Collins succeeded in producing the idealized consumer-seekers they claimed to want. Few individuals then or now read all parts of a periodical in sequence or entirety; those *Lucifer* readers who met views counter to their own (or to those of the editors) may simply have skipped the offending sections. Whether any explicitly modelled their own nascent occult consciousness on the dialogic and anti-authoritarian form of the periodical remains moot. Certainly, the rift which parted Collins and Blavatsky suggests that the question of authority— literary, editorial, or spiritual— could not be deferred indefinitely in their occult milieu. Yet beyond the outcome of its ambitious public-formation project, *Lucifer* has immense historical and intellectual value as a corrective to the attributions of elitism, secrecy, or even anti-democratic hostility that continue to daunt understandings of the Victorian occult press. The occult identity proffered in *Lucifer* was available within and through its dialogic periodical form, open to all those who could purchase or otherwise access its affordable pages. The seeming lawlessness of opinion it fomented was intended to prevent Theosophy from calcifying into a new orthodoxy. More so than in any shadowy Mahatmas, *Lucifer* proclaimed faith in the emancipatory power of the monthly periodical as it both challenged the supremacy of the book within global esoteric traditions and modelled a spiritual subjectivity fit for the modern age.

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Notes

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[1] "The Year is Dead, Long Live Year!", 358-9.

[2] "What's in a Name?," 2.

[3] The relationship between secrecy and occultism is complex and by no means straightforward. While, as many esotericism scholars point out, most modern occult movements have *claimed* to hold or recover long buried secrets, many of their beliefs "had in fact never been concealed, and in the twentieth century [. . .] even gained wide currency in popular discourse" (Von Stuckrad 81). For Stuckrad, more important to occult movements than the possession of actual secrets is the dialectic of revelation and concealment through which they structure their teachings.

[4] See Campbell 2002.

[5] Born in Ekatrinoslav (now Dnipro) in 1831, Blavatsky had been writing fiction since childhood; between 1878 and 1886, she serialized parts of what would later be compiled and published as *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan* (1892) in the *Moskovskiya Vedomosti* and *Russkiy Vestnik* under the pseudonym Radda Bai. Both she and Theosophical co-founder Henry Steel Olcott were also briefly involved with the American occult journal *The Spiritual Scientist* (1874-78). British novelist Mabel Collins, daughter of poet Mortimer Collins, contributed to the press as both a fashion columnist and a writer of serialized stories. By the time of *Lucifer*'s 1887 launch, she had published twelve volumes of fiction. See Cranston 1993 and Farnell 2005.

[6] Unfortunately, we simply do not have the sources to establish the power dynamics of the working relationship between Collins and Blavatsky during their editorship of the paper. As co-founder of the Theosophical Society, Blavatsky was certainly more dominant in the movement than Collins, and when Collins came to write *Morial the Mahatma*, she would depict her Blavatsky-proxy character Miss Riga as an unscrupulous manipulator who exploits her younger female partner and has no real belief in the Mahatmas.

Although Blavatsky announced in the October 1888 issue that Collins would no longer be able to fulfil her editorial duties due to illness, both their names continued to appear on the masthead until January 1889. As such, we can view *Lucifer* as representing, publicly at least, their mutual corporate identity until then.

[7] Ibid, 18.

[8] Prothero, 49.

[9] By 1889, this mandate had coalesced around the following three official objectives: "1) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, colour, or creed; 2) To promote the study of Aryan and other Scriptures, of the World's religion and sciences, and to vindicate the importance of old Asiatic literature [. . .] 3) To investigate the mysteries of Nature under every aspect possible, and the psychic and spiritual powers latent in man especially." See Blavatsky 1889, 39.

[10] Prothero, 6. In addition to its engagement with Western esoteric traditions such as Kabbalah and Gnosticism, the Society also increasingly incorporated Asian religious beliefs after Blavatsky and Olcott decamped to India in 1879. Theosophy's advocacy of karma and reincarnation formed a significant source of

controversy in the eighteen-eighties by seeming to undermine the concept of personal salvation intrinsic to Anglican belief. See Chajes 2019 for more on Theosophical Reincarnationism.

[11] Faxneld, 109.

[12] Prothero, 58.

[13] The first English-language novel to reference Blavatsky and Olcott appears to be F. Marion Crawford's *Mr Issacs* (1882); it was later joined by texts written by TS members, and from a Theosophical point of view, including Sinnett's *Karma* (1885) and *United* (1886) and Mabel Collins's *The Idyll of the White Lotus* (1884) and *The Blossom and the Fruit* (1888). Even Blavatsky tried her hand at fiction, writing a number of Theosophically-tinged supernatural stories first printed in movement periodicals and then posthumously collected in *Nightmare Tales* (1892) and *Two Stories* (1932).

[14] Prothero, 6.

[15] This publication, fully titled *Le Lotus: Revue des Hautes Etudes Théosophiques* is not be confused with the later journal *Le Lotus Bleu: Seul Organe en France do la Société Théosophique*, which ran from 1890-98.

[16] Strappini, 337.

[17] Hammer, 252.

[18] It would take up a defensive stance again in 1895 when Blavatsky came under attack by American spiritualist William Emmette Coleman for plagiarizing substantial portions of *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* from other sources (Coleman). For more on this affair and the viability of Coleman's claims, see Wincheshire.

[19] Kim Farnell suggests that this rift was also intensified by scurrilous rumours, circulated by Blavatsky, that Collins had been engaging in a tantric sex ménage with the brothers and fellow TS members Archibald and Bertram Keightley. See Farnell's *Mystical Vampire* for a lengthier discussion of this scandal and its aftermath.

[20] Demoor, 99.

[21] Farnell, 57-8.

[22] Farnell, 75.

[23] Launched in 1882 by William Stainton Moses, *Light* has remained in continuous production to the present day, although it is no longer issued in weekly instalments.

[24] Founded in September 1887, it ran until 1897 when, as Pat Deveney explains, it was replaced by *The Theosophical Review.* In that period, it went through a number of different editorial combinations, including Blavatsky and Collins, then Blavatsky and Annie Besant in the wake of Collins's previously-described expulsion from the journal, and then finally Besant and G.R.S. Mead. See John Patrick Deveney, "Lucifer."

[25] Other signed contributions came from high-profile Theosophists such as Anna Kingsford, Gerald Massey, and Franz Hartmann.

[26] As Per Faxneld notes, this title also reflects Blavatsky's ongoing attraction to what he terms "Satanic Feminism (111).

[27] Consider, for example, the content-focused lead articles in *The Theosophist* for the first four months of *Lucifer*'s publication— Fredal and Pratt (Oct, Nov, and Dec 1887). While *The Theosophist*'s then-editor Henry Steel Olcott was clearly trying to focus on specific esoteric teachings, Blavatsky and Collins's leaders primarily sought instead to promote a combative spirit against Britain's public sphere: see "What's in a Name?"; "The Sign of the Times"; "Let Every Man Prove his Own Work"; "'Lucifer' to the Archbishop of Canterbury."

[28] "What's in a Name?" 1-2.

[29] Ibid, 3.

[30] Ibid, 3-5.

[31] Ibid, 3.

[32] Ibid, 3.

[33] Ibid, 4.

[34] Ibid, 4.

[35] Ibid, 5.

[36] "To the Readers of *Lucifer,"* 340.

[37] Ibid, 340.

[38] Ibid, 340.

[39] Ibid, 342.

[40] "God Speaks for Law and Order," 293.

[41] Ibid, 292.

[42] "What is Truth?"431.

[43] See *The Theosophist*'s publication of advertising rates in "Special Notices."

[44] "The Editor's Reply," 344.

[45] H.S. Olcott, "The Genesis of Theosophy," 210, 217.

[46] Prothero, 1.

[47] Prothero, 81-2.

[48] "To Correspondents," 352.
[49] Indeed, while Theosophy did not enshrine any political position in its constitution, members of the TS actively contributed to a range of political causes at the *fin de siècle*, including the struggle for female suffrage in Britain, home rule in India, Ireland, and Scotland, and anti-vivisection. For more on the history of Theosophical politics at home and abroad, see Viswanathan, Dixon, and Shaw.
[50] See for example Paschal Beverly Randolph's sex-magic treatise *Eulis! The History of Love.*
[51] T.B.H., 213.
[52] Bright, "Theosophy and Modern Socialism," 284.
[53] Ibid, 287.
[54] See Harbottle, "Socialism and Theosophy"; Bright, "Theosophy and Modern Socialism"; Bright, "Theosophy and Modern Socialism (concluded)"; Harbottle, "Karma and Free Will."
[55] Matthew Beaumont, 177.
[56] Besant replaced Collins as co-editor in 1889; after Blavatsky's death in 1891, she alternately solo and co-edited (with G.R.S. Mead) the journal until 1897.
[57] See "Dialogue Between the Two Editors," and "Dialogue on the Mysteries of the Afterlife."
[58] "Dialogue Between Two Editors", 328.
[59] Blavatsky qtd in Goodrick-Clarke, 218.
[60] For more on the H.B. of L., its clash with Blavatskyian Theosophy, and its business model, see Godwin, Chanel, and Deveney.
[61] "Lodges of Magic," 89.
[62] So frequent were these allegations that *Lucifer* was forced to rebut them not once but twice. In Feb 1889, Blavatsky writes "The editor, one of its Founders, does not agree with this view. Dr. Hartmann is a Fellow of the T.S., and would hardly ridicule the body he belongs to. But he does give hard hits to those members who make a farce of the Society; and especially to its false friends, numerous parodists, and enemies." She would address this topic at greater length in the following month's leader article. See Unheaded Note and "On Pseudo-Theosophy,".
[63] Hartmann, "The Talking Image of Urur," Dec 15 1888, 294.
[64] Hartmann, "The Talking Image of Urur," Feb 15, 1889, 460.
[65] Crichton, 260.
[66] A.E., 341.
[67] Ibid, 341.
[68] "Let Every Man Prove his Own Work," 166.
[69] "What Good has Theosophy done in India?".
[70] See Besant.
[71] See for example "To the Readers of Lucifer," "To Theosophists and Readers of *Lucifer*," and "How to help Theosophy."
[72] "The Path," 351.
[73] Morrison, 2.
[74] A notable exception, digital publisher Adam Matthew Digital does incorporate a number of spiritualist periodicals in the "Spiritualism, Sensation, and Magic" module of its *Victorian Popular Culture* database, including issues of W. T. Stead's *Borderland* (1893-1897) and *Light* (1881-present). These runs are, however, far from complete, and the selected titles represent only a small fraction of the spiritualist and occult periodicals printed in Victorian Britain.
[75] *International Association for the Preservation of Spiritualist and Occult Periodicals*, http://www.iapsop.com/about.html, accessed May 20 2018.
[76] See Gilbert; Morrison; Youngkin (2010, 2016, and 2018). Morrison's article calls attention to the range and variety of occult periodicals across the nineteenth century, revealing them to be essential if critically overlooked components of what he theorizes to be the revival's rich "counter public" sphere. In her work, Youngkin has drawn attention to how spiritualist editors, in particular women like Julia Schlesinger and Emma Hardinge Britten, deployed the periodical form to authorize and publicize their own bespoke brands of heterodox belief.
[77] See Hodgson 1885.
[78] A.I.R, "A True Theosophist."
[79] Campbell, 15.
[80] Miller, 1, 3.
[81] Ibid. 224.
[82] Ibid, 9.